

CROW INDIAN TRIBE



Resources Report

C U L T U R E A N D H I S T O R Y

CULTURE AND HISTORY

The Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS (pp. 3-39) presents a brief section on the culture and history of the Crow Indian Tribe. George Reed Jr. of the Cultural Affairs Department prepared most of the following section to replace the section in the Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS. The sub-section on Historically Important Events Related to the U.S. Government was prepared based on information from Ethno Study 2002.

Introduction

We know where we came from, we know where we've been, and we know whom we are. We came through three transitions to become who we are. We were (Awaakiiwilaxpaake) People of the Earth, we were all one mankind, we became (Biiluke) on Our Side, we became (Awashe) Earthen Lodges, and we became Apsaalooke some 2000 years ago.

While we were (Awaakiiwilaxpaake) People of the Earth, when the birds and animals could talk, some of us wanted to fight each other. They wanted warfare. They approached our Creator and asked if they could fight each other. Our Creator said, "First you must prove to me that you are men enough to fight." He placed a man, with a bow and arrow at the bottom of a sheer cliff in the water and told the men to dive off the cliff, but soon changed their minds once they saw the man with his bow and arrow cocked and ready to shoot anyone who dove off the cliff.

Finally one man walked up to the cliff and dove off into the water. He lay dead in the water with an arrow protruding from his collarbone and blood streaming from his nostrils. Our Creator said, "Iilak bacheek, there is a man (kooshtakaatbaawiik). I won't make too many of him, (baapiihaaksee) from this day forward, (haaweewiakssalah) try to wipe him out." From that time we have been called Biiluke. Even unto this day we still refer ourselves as Biiluke.

While we were Biiluke. We lived in a wooded area with vast bodies of water (Balebilichke isaatkaasuuk). We were fishermen, we hunted small game and waterfowl, we dug up roots and bulbs, we gathered nuts and berries, and we trapped the fur-bearing animals for our clothing. We lived in makeshift shelters, lean-tos and wickiups. We migrated westward to the banks of the Big River, in search of a certain Sacred Tobacco Plant, which was to be found in a mountainous region. We became Awashe, Earthen Lodges.

We retained all of our survival skills, but we became farmers. Oral history says, "We didn't stay there too long and we moved on, but for some reason we spoke the same language, which is still used today, after some two thousand years." No Vitals with many of his family and friends of the Real Water Band, of the Awashe, broke from the band, in search of the Sacred Tobacco Plant. This was the exodus that commenced the Great Migration.

We migrated throughout the northern and southern plains, where we came upon lakes with salt on their banks. We ventured into Canada twice but the Sacred Tobacco Plant could not be found. No Vitals has passed away during the migration on the Great Plains. It was his son who carried on this quest and fasted on Cloud's Peak and saw The Sacred Tobacco Plant glowing on the east slopes of the Big Horn Mountains, where "Raven Owner Was Badgered." The Sacred Tobacco Society was initiated about this time, and that was the beginning of the Apsaalooke

Nation. We picked up and adopted various aspects of our Apsalooke way of life, as we progressed from one era to another.

The Four Basic Components Of Our Apsaalooke Way Of Life

Government

We lived under one rule, a government where leadership, trust and respect was earned. Certain accomplishments had to be met before an individual could be called a Good Man, and only Good Men were deciding the future and well being of the nation.

Requirements:

- Leading a successful war party
- Touching a live enemy under fire with the bare hand
- Capturing a weapon from the enemy under fire
- Capturing a tethered horse in the middle of the enemy's camp

Clan System

As we progressed through the ages, we adopted numerous aspects of our Apsaalooke way of life. The Clan System, given to us by Old man Coyote, was a social control. It built character and self-esteem. It instilled respect and self-control. We are born into the clan of our mothers. Our clan fathers and clan mothers build us up. Our teasing clan, the children of our fathers clan, tear us down, for this status is very intoxicating. Above all things the clan system is one of our religions. The people before us would address our Creator as First Maker, My Clan Father. When we call on our clan fathers, we are calling on our clan fathers, and we are calling on our Creator only in a worldly manner. That is why, what the clan father asks for the clan child always comes to pass.

The Sacred Sweat Lodge

First man Corn Silk, retrieved his twin son from the Beings In The Water, who had raised him from infancy. Corn Silk said he would use the things of this earth to construct the first sweat lodge. Before he lit the fire, he said, "With this fire remember that you are not a being without fire, an animal." He constructed a sweat lodge out of sapling trees, he dug a pit in the middle to place the heated rocks, and he covered the sweat lodge with robes and took his son inside. He poured water into the hot rocks in a series of four sessions. After the completion of each session, he prayed and raised the door. Corn Silk lowered the door, prayed, and raised the door. After the second session he brought fresh water into the Sweat lodge and drank it. He lowers the door, prayed, and poured water in the rocks again, commencing the third session. The same procedure is followed until completion of the fourth session. When the door is raised, that is the completion of the Sweat Lodge ritual.

The Sacred Pipe

A celestial gift, it was presented to a young man, through a visitation. It is used to pray, to lead caravans, processions, to go off into battle, to make peace and to bring to people of our mourning. The pipe is respected with reverence. There must not be any movement or talking while the pipe is being smoked. Everyone must be seated. The pipe is passed to the left with the

stem first. It cannot be rotated. If it is rotated it must be unwound, and to the smoking position before it is passed on. The pipe cannot be turned upside down, nor can it touch the ground. In the Sacred Tobacco Society, a woman leads the processions with a pipe, but yet they are not allowed to smoke the pipe. It is the reverence and the respect of the pipe. Spirit Patrons, Spirit Powers have various ways in conduct and avoidance. It is one of the laws, supernatural laws that we adhere to. In time of war the pipe will be passed between two opposing forces and will not cross the path of the pipe. This is how much respect and reverence is extended the pipe.

Smoke Talk

All the Good Men (Chiefs) would gather, smoke the pipe and decide the future of the nation. Whatever the majority of those Good Men decided became law. In essence our tribal council is really a replication of Smoke Talk. People in mourning are brought out of their grief-stricken state and placed in a better atmosphere and environment. Gallant men recited their good fortunes. Returning home from battle without a scratch, they would appeal to our Creator by virtue of their good fortune. May these people prosper, may they be healthy, may they see better days, and may they be happy again. The pipe is offered to men folk. The pipe cannot be refused, for if it is refused, their problem will precipitate.

These Good Men were true to the word “good.” They never fought each other, they fought the enemy, they were generous, they would cook and feed the camp and only when the women and children had eaten first, then they would eat.

Historically Important Events Related to the U.S. Government

Introduction

The chronological events in this section were taken from a recent BLM draft document completed by Ethnoscience Inc. (Ethno Study 2002). That document is a study of cultural impacts on Indian tribes from oil, gas and CBM development in southeastern Montana. Excerpts from Ethno Study 2002 are used in this text. The Ethno Study appendices have transcripts of interviews with Crow tribal members and site-specific information about available cultural and historic site data.

Chronological Events

The Lewis and Clark expedition spent one month in the Crow Territory in 1806. This helped to foster good relations between the Crow and fur traders.

In 1807 Fort Manuel Lisa was established at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Bighorn rivers. Manuel Lisa was the first trader to establish a business in this region. The Crow traded with the fort from 1808 until 1811.

In 1825 a number of tribes in the northern Plains signed a treaty of friendship with the U.S. Government. This included both the Crow and the Cheyenne (Medicine Crow 1992:3; Stands In Timber and Liberty 1972:125; Weist 1977:39). This was the first step in the official long standing relationship between the U.S. Government and the Crow Tribe.

In 1837 small pox swept through the eastern Plains. The Crow were able to avoid the epidemic for a few years by scattering into the mountains, but it eventually hit the Crow camps in 1840

(Bradley 1991:74; Medicine Crow 1992:14). The devastation was so bad that two warriors sacrificed themselves by riding off of a cliff, currently identified as Sacrifice Cliff, which overlooks the Metra complex in Billings (Wagner and Allen 1987:204-206). In 1848 the Crow were once again fighting small pox, and in 1849 hundreds of Crow were killed by a flu epidemic (Bradley 1991:75). By the end of the decade the majority of the Crow were dead.

In 1851, 10,000 Plains Indians, including the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ogallala, Brule, Crow, Shoshone, Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Mandan, Arikara and Minnetaree, met with the U.S. Government at Fort Laramie. The meeting resulted in the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. The government agreed to provide the Tribes with annuities in the form of hardware's, tools and farm animals for 50 years (Bradley 1991:84-85; Medicine Crow 1992:3,14; Weist 1977:444). Please refer to (1851 Ft. Laramie Treaty, Tribally Interpreted Territory Boundary) for description of tribal territory that was agreed upon by Crow Tribal leaders at the treaty signing.

The stakes became even higher as the U.S. Government began building forts long the trail, which the Sioux viewed as a clear violation of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty. The Sioux (Vestal 1984:68) attacked nearly every train crossing the Bozeman Trail.

The loss of men and money led the U.S. Government to review their policy on Indian Territory. They looked for a means to obtain a level of peace with the northern Indian tribes. In the spring of 1868, the U.S. Government held a series of meetings with the northern Plains tribes. This treaty further reduced Indian Territory. The Crow lost their lands north of the Yellowstone, south of the Montana territorial line and east of the 107th meridian (*see Figure 1*). In return for not fighting with whites or each other and agreeing to stay on their designated lands, the government closed down the Bozeman Trail and its forts. Furthermore, the government guaranteed money, buildings, tools, agents and teachers to train them into becoming farmers. The majority of the attending tribes signed the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 on April 29.

The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty met with little success. In part, this was due to confusion on what constituted tribal lands. For instance, the River Crow thought that they had received land along the Missouri River (Medicine Crow 1992). The treaty had no effect in curbing the conflicts between the Tribes and with white immigrants. If anything, the fighting escalated.

In 1869 the U.S. Government established the first Crow Agency near present-day Livingston, Montana (Medicine Crow 1992:14; Bradley 1991:96-98).

In 1872 the River Crow returned to their Missouri River hunting grounds, and the Mountain Crow began settling near the Agency (Bradley 1991:99). The Mountain Crow, who stayed in southern Montana, made their first attempts at farming. Unfortunately, floods and grasshoppers destroyed their grain (Bradley 1991:125).

In the winter of 1875, the U.S. Government ordered all Indians to return to their reservations by January of 1876. General Gibbon negotiated with the Crow to join the U.S. in a war against the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho. The Crow readily agreed (Linderman 1962:154). Similar arrangements were made with the Shoshone.

The Crow were struggling. They initially resisted farming, until Chief Medicine Crow stood before the council in 1881 and affirmed his desire to farm. The following year, hundreds of

Crow began farming (Bradley 1991:127). However, farming did not make the Crow self-sufficient, and in 1882 a number of Crow were allowed to leave the reservation to hunt. Spotted Horse and Crazy Head were among the Crow that joined their previous foes, the Sioux, to hunt along the Little Missouri River (Bradley 1991:128).

Under pressure by the U.S. Government, the Crow agreed to cede western boundaries of their land. In exchange, the government agreed to build houses for the Crow and buy livestock for them (Bradley 1991:113-114; Medicine Crow 1992:3). The passing of the How-How Treaty on April 11, 1882, required moving from the Crow Agency to a place near Absarokee. Despite the loss of almost one-quarter of their reservation, the call by miners and white settlers for more land continued.

White settlers vehemently opposed the development of the reservation. In response, a number of Special Governmental Agents explored the possibility of revoking the 1884 Presidential Executive Order and placing the Cheyenne on the Crow Reservation (Weist 1977:105). Understandably, the Crow were not in favor of this proposal.

U.S. attempts to obtain reservation lands were further fueled by the signing of the General Allotment Act on February 8, 1887 (Bradley 1991:134). Ostensibly, the Act was designed to provide Indians with the same homesteading rights as whites.

Under pressure by miners, who wanted access to the minerals that were on the Crow Reservation, Congress passed the 1891 Act, which ceded the western third of the Crow Reservation. Although the Act allowed the Crow to homestead in the ceded lands, it did not allow the Crow to homestead along the rivers. After some deliberation, the Crow Agency was once again moved, this time to the Little Bighorn River (Bradley 1991:132; Medicine Crow 1992:150).

In 1905 they ceded more of their lands (Medicine Crow 1992:3). Even more devastating to all Indians, the Supreme Court determined that reservations were federal land and the government could do anything it wanted with the reservations—as long as it benefited the Indians (Bradley 1991:167-174).

Despite governmental mismanagement and continuing efforts to take lands away, the early 1900s are viewed as being good days. By the turn of the century, the Crow were nearly self-sufficient. They sold surplus vegetables on the market, sold flour and oats to the Agency and supplied all of the flour needed on both the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations (Bradley 1991:144-146). Despite overgrazing and rustling, the cattle business was thriving. As time went on, the Crow became savvier both economically and politically.

In the 1910s, the government decided individual ownership of cattle should be abandoned in favor of a tribal herd. Toward this endeavor, the government took ownership of the Indian cattle. Those Indians that refused to relinquish their cattle faced imprisonment. In 1919 a policy of removing Indian horses from the reservation began. This was a severe blow to the Crow and Cheyenne culture (Bradley 1991:223; Newell 1980:68; Medicine Crow 1992:107). Horses were the traditional measure of wealth; they used them for racing and as gifts. The wholesale destruction of their herds made them poor once again.

In 1917 the U.S. entered into World War I. Indians, who were wards of the state, were drafted at a higher rate than the rest of the nation (Bradley 1991:209). However, the experience ultimately benefited Indians. In 1920 the Crow Act provided allotments to members of the Crow Tribe who did not already have one and conferred rights of the mountains and minerals to the Tribe. It also distributed the tribal herds among tribal members.

In gratitude for their actions in the war, the U.S. passed the Snyder Act of 1924, which gave Indians full citizenship (Bradley 1991:212; Weist 1977:188). They now had the ability to vote and with it the ability to influence policies.

Ten years later, the Howard-Wheeler Act of 1934 passed in Congress. The Northern Cheyenne accepted the Act. The Crow did not, preferring to stay with the rights provided by the Crow Act (Bradley 1991:246-258; Medicine Crow 1992; Weist 1977:193). Today, the Tribes continue to fight for control of their lands and their future.

1851 Ft. Laramie Treaty, Tribally Interpreted Territory Boundary

Valid treaties are binding within the territorial limits of the states as they are elsewhere throughout the United States, although the bulk of private relations usually fall under the control of the states, a treaty will override the Power of the Father.

The Great Spirit of truth, First Maker, Sovereign of the universe, is indeed honest and fair. He demands that his laws prevail on this Earth, everywhere and with everyone; the good and evil alike, The Evil. He will recompense and fully reject and of the good he will make claim and reward. The Law of Nature is his Law and ignorance of it is no excuse. He demands to be, and is a party to, every "bargain," "agreement," "control," "contract," and "treaty." To exclude Him is to exclude the parties, and with no parties, no treaty is but a fraud of the most unholy sort.

Rationale

At dawn on the morning of September 17, 1851, our great leader, Sits In The Middle Of The Land, AKA Blackfoot, burned incense, he took out his Spirit Patron, he smoked, he prayed and he sang. He was asking for guidance for what he was to undertake later that day.

Sits In The Middle Of The Land camped aside from the other Indigenous groups, who were there at Horse Creek, to be apart of the treaty negotiations. Later that day, as he prepared himself, he told the rest of his entourage to put on their best attire, he had them paint their faces because that day was a great day. The Apsaalooke rode into the treaty grounds from a distance, as they approached they stood out because they were attired in the best dress-up clothing they had and they were magnificent. All eyes were on them as they circled the gathering and dismounted at an opening.

When it was time to say his peace, Sits In The Middle Of The Land described the Apsaalooke Country. "As long as there is just but one Apsaalooke left, I want that one Apsaalooke to have a place to come home to.

He said, "Where my four base teepee poles touch the ground, will be my land. The geographical points are where Elk River and the Big Rivers meet, on down to the Big saddle in the Black Hills, west to pohpohchasse on the ridge (Wind River Mountains), Continental Divide, then

along the ridge to Three Forks, on to the Great Falls and to Big River. This is Apsaalooke Country. All lands within these points will be Apsaalooke land” (see Figure 1).

When he concluded his talk on what he wanted for the Apsaalooke, as a last statement he said, “Do not write this down, whoever interferes with what I am doing, I want something to happen to them, if they are persistent, I want them to be gone, I want them to die.” This is the unwritten code of the Apsaalooke, which has been handed down generation to generation by word of mouth. He also said, “If anyone disputes me, let them say their peace,” and not a sound stirred or a word spoken.

The actual interpretation of these geographical points of the four lodge poles has been misconstrued to say, where the Powder River meets the Elk River, some Black Hills east of Casper, Wyoming, the headwaters of the Powder River, and the headwaters of the Musselshell River. Our interpreter didn’t speak Apsaalooke nor did he know the topography, but what he translated was what Congress ratified (see Figure 1).

We the Cultural Committee and Cultural Affairs Department of the Apsaalooke nation are reiterating what our great leader described as Apsaalooke Country. According to Glottal Chronology, we Apsaalooke have been in this locality for the past 2000 years.

Since Congress acknowledged our claim, title, right, and possessions by ratifying the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, we want to be the Clearing House for all the happenings within this 2000 years time frame. We want to be the Clearing House on all matters, historical and sacred, pertaining to Apsaalooke Country, the customs and traditional practices. We further disclaim and dispute those publications, past and recent articles in newspapers, printed and bound books of the traditional way of the Apsaalooke, that some of this printed words were “made-up” by individuals, and this information does not reflect the way and true beliefs of the Great Apsaalooke Nation.

Belief-Ways Prelude

If a nation or a people are sovereign, they must be of the Creator and thusly there cannot be more than one Sovereign in heaven or on earth for there is only one Creator. This is the mentality of the Apsaalooke. We live in harmony with nature so we adhere to Natural Law.

The law of nature is those fit and just rules of conduct which the Creator has prescribed to man as a dependent and social being, and which are to be asserted from the deduction of right reason, though they may be more precisely known and more explicitly declared by Devine Revelation.

The Apsaalooke believe in a Creator, who knows all, hears all, and he does repay you, good with good, and bad with bad. I guess it could be called Divine Vengeance. We are told, “There is a power that watches over us, the Apsaalooke. If you mistreated one you will pay for it. We are told the Apsaalooke are a great people. Their words are sacred, and their teeth sharp. They can take a common man and place him on a pedestal, or they can take distinguished persons and rub their faces in the dirt.”

Belief-Ways

We believe in a Supreme Power, who is responsible for life, all living things and all things in the universe. We believe life to commence at the moment of conception. The most sacred time in an individual's life is the time spent in the mother's womb and the most crucial time in an individual's life are the first 36 months. How we are nurtured, our environment, in those 36 months is what we will be for the rest of our lives. Our children are not really ours until they reach their third birth date.

The psyche is what life is all about. A child is born with a stump of a brain, and as the child grows, so grows the brain. When the child is three years old, the brain is fully developed. This is why we are told our children are not really ours until they reach their third birth date. We must love them, respect them and cherish them. The most sacred beings on the face of this earth are our children.

There are seven sources of power that we appeal to, the seven directions where we extend the pipe. The seven openings of the head are symbolic of these powers. Our senses are a means for our Creator to communicate with us: Seeing, hearing, smelling, touch, and taste. We have intuitive feelings and we also rely on dreams. The white society has five senses, but the Apsaalooke have seven.

Visions, hearing, voices, smelling odor or aroma, being touched or shoved, and tasting experiences. "It was so real I could taste it" is an expression often used. "I could feel that something was going to happen, but there wasn't a thing I could do about it." The Apsaalooke can do something about these emotions. We are told, our Creator communicates with us in our dreams, we utilize our dreams the good dreams and the not so good dreams. I re-tell my good dreams for my clan children, and I heed my bad dreams as warnings and I have rituals I perform to avoid misfortune.

We believe in a hereafter, a camp beyond, but we are not in a hurry to get there because life is so incredibly precious. We do not contemplate death, we don't wish for it, nor do we pray about it. We must all leave this life sometime, we can't go over it, under it or around it. When our time comes, we must go, but life is so precious, we want to live it to the utmost.

We do not know what the future holds in store for us; we don't know what is to happen tomorrow or the next day. We are told we have nothing on this earth, the only thing we have is the gift of wish making (Baleewiilaale). So we wish for good things to happen, we do not wish for bad things, and death is a bad thing.

The spoken word is sacred to the Apsaalooke. We must be mindful of our speech. If we do not know the meaning of a word, we are not to say it; if we do not know the proper pronunciation of a word, we are not to say it, for fear that we may cause harm to come to ourselves or to others. When we speak to each other, we must use kind words. When we pray, we must ask for good things and death is not a good thing.

How I go about my life will dictate our hereafter. If we are kind, loving, caring, and sharing persons, we have nothing to worry about when we go beyond, but if we are not a kind, loving, caring and sharing person, we have something to worry about when we go beyond. There is no room for negotiations.

No matter how much we love each other, when loved ones leave us, they are not longer a part of us, they are "beings without bodies" (Baaaxualeetuuk) and they are treacherous. What we put or place on them, it belongs to nobody; nobody can claim it. We have consecrated our loved ones back to our Creator. When we lay our loved ones to rest, that is the last time we touch them. To disturb them is sacrilegious. The white man's laws are trying to make me do the things I am not supposed to do.

When we clothe our deceased, we put on their clothes with the left extremities first, the left arm, then the right arm, the left leg and then the right leg. The people before us used to convert left-handed people because the left side was a symbol of death and the right side was a symbol of life.

Whatever we did in our lives, we commenced with the right. As living human beings we put our clothes on with the right extremities first; we stepped out of our lodges with a right step. All of our ceremonies and rituals have a clockwise motion. Only the most gallant of men may go against the grain because they have defied death.

If we are to do something for each other, we must do it while we are alive. If we are to be kind to one another, we must do it while we are alive. If we want to honor one another, we must do it while we are alive. For when a person draws their last breath, they are no longer a part of us, no matter how much we loved them. They are Beings Without Bodies and they are treacherous. They do not want to be disturbed. We are not to mention or call their names, so we refer to them as "the ones who are gone." We do not have memorials, to do so is asking for trouble. By meddling with them and calling their names, we are asking them to invite us.

In historical times, we never counted heads, we counted lodges. If we counted the members of a household, surely there will be one missing. We are not to count the numbers of the deceased, if we do, we keep increasing their numbers.

When a person is gone and we try to honor him, we are doing it for ourselves. When our loved ones are gone, they are gone. They are no longer a part of us.

The lodge is sacred to the Apsaalooke. Prior to our time, the back of the lodge, the side opposite the door, was a very respected place. Only gallant men had the right to sit there. Ordinary men, women, and children sat at the sides.

When we approach a home, we must stomp our feet at the door to dislodge any contaminants because we come into contact with many things with our feet. Anymore, the only time we do this is in the winter, when there is snow on the ground. According to certain Spirit Patrons/Powers, footwear cannot be brought to the back of the lodge; footwear was usually placed at the door.

Beings Without Fire, animals, are not allowed in the lodge. Beings Without Fire, especially birds, coming into the lodge is a Bad Omen. If you catch a bird in your lodge, it means that one of the members of the household will be missing or will die.

The door to our lodges must be faced east, where the day comes from, and where all good things come from. We are told the Maker of the day is present at the east. The west is where the departed go; it is where bad things come from, inclement weather and sickness. If we face our

doors to the west, we are asking for trouble. The door to the lodge is respected; it is only for the living. When someone dies in a lodge, they are exited under the sides.

Where the Spirit has left the body, people cannot sleep; they toss and turn. We are told to get up and walk around our lodge, to the right. Our spirits will return and we can fall asleep. For no apparent reason, individuals cannot be awakened and taken out of their home. If individuals are awakened and taken out of their home, for no apparent reason, they never come back.

Certain Spirit Patrons/Powers have certain restrictions that must be adhered to in the home. Example: No crying, no rough-housing, no round objects, no horse tack, no tempers flaring, no arrows, no breaking of bones, and no kidneys.

An owl roosting on a house is a bad omen. Owls are messengers. They predict weather and news. In the evening, an owl will hoot, "It is dark; it is cold; and it is coming." Surely a storm is on the way.

A dog crying for no apparent reason around the lodge is a bad omen. Children crying for no apparent reason in the home is a bad omen; it is reported they will cause someone to die.

Everything associated with the home is sacred; this carried over from our home, our lodge, and our teepee.

The most sacred time in the home is the time when the members of the household are eating. We are not to raise our tempers. If we have nothing to say, it is better to eat in peace and quiet; but if there is laughter, it is better. It is reported, "We only eat with each other for a half day," meaning we don't know who may be missing the next meal. This is something our Creator did not let us know, so we must cherish the time we spend together, especially at mealtimes.

The intent of this synopsis is to alert or make you aware of the meanings or reasons why or how we go about our Apsaalooke way of life without exposing too much of our sacred ways. Twenty-nine years ago, in the prime of our lives, these sacred ways were discussed. It was said, if it is so helpful to the human cause, why not share it. In the 29 years that have lapsed, some of our sacred ways have been compromised. We have certain individuals, who ostentatiously profess to be the sole religious authorities. It is these individuals who distort our belief-ways and disseminate misconceptions and half-truths.

The one simple goal of the Cultural Affairs Department was to re-establish the Cultural Committee, so that correct information can be disseminated and shared by all parties who take an interest in us. Of course, we can only disclose certain information.

Celestial Bodies

Sun – We are to challenge the sun, to rise before he does. If we rise before him and are about our daily lives before he comes over the horizon, he will have pity on us and bless us with a long prosperous life. The Greasy Mouth use the Sun as their symbol because one of their clan member's Spirit Patron was the Sun; he could light his pipe by extending it to the Sun. The Sun is an old man; we address him as the Very Old Man. He is the one who gives us the energy of life.

The Sun had a son who lives on this earth. He was one of the ones who made the earth livable. Grandmother's grandson. For that reason the sun loved his children very much; he would apply paint often when our enemy was coming near.

Moon – The moon is an old woman; we address her as the Very Old Woman. She is the one who controls the weather, the tide, and the cycle of women. However she rises will foretell the weather. The most sacred time of the moonrise is the fourth evening after the new moon. This is the time to do certain rituals and ceremonies. When a new moon rises, we are told to jump and make a wish, "For the next new moon, I want to be this tall." The infants and toddlers are made to jump by picking them up and going through the motion for them.

The stars are like people; they too live in camps and they too move from one camp to another. When the night is clear and the stars shining bright, a star moving camp is visible. We are to make wishes, wishes for prosperity.

We associate with all the constellations, but we have special association with certain ones.

The Big Dipper – Seven Brothers, the brothers-in-law of Yellow Leggings, moved into the sky because the people of the earth too had mystic power.

The Morning Star – The Morning Star made a visitation to the earth. When he turned to leave, he revealed himself. He had coyote tails on the heels of his moccasins. He is a Good Man; he is the one to greet us each day.

The Stationary Star – Along with the help of the seven brothers, the Big Dipper, the Stationary Star will guide you to your destination.

The Hand Star – The twins chased Sorta Red Woman and kicked her as she ran along the foot of the mountains. The twins would not say, "I counted coup," but they would say, "My brother counted coup and I counted the second coup." Her blood would splatter as they took turns kicking her, the red clay is the blood of Sorta Red Woman. She reached for the sky, but Thrown Into the Spring took out his beaver tail knife and cut off her hand. She fell to the ground and scattered. The fragments of her body are the rock images that are found by persons who have good fortunes with them. Her hand stayed in the sky.

The Milky Way – The path they take when women are captured or stolen. When a storm is coming, the storm is addressed, "This isn't where they took your wife; they took her upstream, try to make out." Teasing clan, living and deceased, can also be mentioned.

The Weasel – The weasel has been a Spirit Patron to many Apsaalooke. Yellow paint is symbolic of this animal. The weasel plays an important role in the Sacred Tobacco Society and is used in the warrior societies.

The Evening – When the Evening star appears in the west, that is a very sacred time, shortly after the Evening Star rises, certain rituals and ceremonies are performed.

Cycle of Life

The Apsaalooke home, the lodge, the teepee explicitly, exemplifies the cycle of life. All the parts of the teepee have notions of the things associated with life. There are ten teepee poles on

the sides of the teepee, five in each side, which represent the ten lunar months a child spends in the mother's womb. The four cardinal points are represented in the four base poles of the teepee. The door poles, the ventilator poles, and the poles in the back of the teepee all have specific meanings. The cycle of life is comprised of four parts or components: Plant Life, Animal Life, Human Life and the Elements. Each of these four parts is represented in the teepee.

The bison hide that covers the teepee represents the animal world. The teepee poles that hold up the bison hide represents the plant world. We place the fire in the middle of the teepee because it is too fierce, it represents the elements. We, the humans, place ourselves at the outer edge of the teepee, in close proximity with the plant and animal worlds. We are all inter-dependent; we need oxygen and the plants need carbon dioxide; we eat roots and berries and so do the animals; we eat meat and so do the animals. When one component of the cycle of life is missing, there will be no more life.

The four parts or components of the cycle of life are interdependent. We breathe the oxygen the plants emit and they use the carbon dioxide we emit. We eat the roots, bulbs, and berries and some animals also eat the plants. We eat the animals and the animals eat us sometimes. We breathe the air and drink the water, and so do the animals. The human being is the only one who uses fire. The others do not use fire; animals fear it. Our purpose in this life and on this earth is to make sure the future generations will enjoy this life just as much as our ancestors did. The rate we are going, the air, the earth, and water is so polluted, the future generations of mankind may need protective clothing and breathing apparatuses to go outdoors to play.

Plant Life

Now we turn to all the medicinal and ceremonial plants. From the beginning, they were intended to take away sickness. They were always ready and waiting to heal us. We are fortunate to have them among us, those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind, we send thank you to the Baawaaxpe, the powers known and unknown.

In modern day society, most people tend to think of it only as something we take once we are already sick. In Apsaalooke tradition, though, medicine is also what keeps us well. It is part of the food we eat and the water we drink. Almost every growing thing has the potential to be a medicine and to help other living things. It's our daily prayers, we pray that the food we partake will make us healthy and prosperous so that we will live a long life. The foods we eat are also medicines. When they are healthy, they keep us well. As we become removed from natural foods and eat processed foods instead, we open ourselves to disease.

Animal Life

They were the first to inhabit the earth and were critical in preparing for the coming of human beings. We were taught many things from the animal world.

Oral traditions speak of a time long ago, when some of our people were overcome with grief. They were not able to get on with their lives because they were always in a state of mourning. Spirit Patrons/Powers came in animal forms and taught them songs; songs to sing so they may prosper or songs to sing so their children will grow up without sickness.

Most, if not all, animals nourished us and clothed us. Throughout history, animals have always been used as a symbol of power. Animal parts as well as figures were used as objects of spirituality. The art scribed on hides, robes, shields, and rocks all have significance. We Apsaalooke do not do things for the sake of doing them; there is reason behind our actions. We are entwined with nature; we live in harmony with nature. Rather than using manmade concepts or products, we use natural phenomenon as religious symbols. We use these symbols as intermediaries.

Human Beings

If we are not kind and considerate to fellow men, there really shouldn't be any sense of praying for each other, because we all have a finite trace of our Creator, to whom we pray. All living things are sacred. We all have a finite trace of our Maker present in us, it is life. It is on loan to us; it is a privilege; once it is taken back, we cease to exist.

The Indigenous Nations based their ways of life on a Religious Society, where life is incredibly precious, all forms of life are sacred. We, the Apsaalooke, are taught not to touch other people's faces. The head is sacred. It represents the powers present on this earth. The people before us respected each other; they never touched each other, especially men because of the avoidance of their Spirit Patrons/Powers. Some would go delirious if certain parts of their bodies were touched and certain rituals had to be performed to bring them back.

The Elements

Earth – Our Mother Earth gives life, she has for many centuries. In the spring of the year, she generates new life; we say, "The earth is revealing herself." It is a time of happiness when we see the carpet of green throughout the land. For no apparent reason, we are happy, it is a new year for the Apsaalooke.

The earth is our Real Mother. Our biological mother will leave us, but if we have a home, we still have another mother. We must respect, love and honor our mothers. We must take good care of our mother so she can take good care of us.

The earth is one of the most powerful forces in this universe. When she stretches, the earth quakes. It has devastating power; it can not be controlled by man. When this power is out of control, it is impossible to come to the assistance of fellow man. We use the Earth in our religions. We do not abuse her; we respect her with so much reverence; we do not dig up the ground. That is why when we are going to take natural products for our own consumption, we would ask to be excused. We only used according to our needs. When we had enough, we would say, "We've done good. If we overdo it, our Creator will not like it; we must save some, there is still tomorrow."

If we take care of ourselves, we will live a long time, long enough to enjoy all the good things on this earth. When we are old, decrepit and tired, our mother will take us back into her bosom.

Wind – The wind/air is the most crucial of all the elements. Without it we wouldn't last over 10 minutes. In the beginning, First Maker took some clay, shaped it in her own image and blew life into it with her breath. Life is the breath of our Maker, which is why life is so precious. We breathe air to sustain life, and with this air, we emit sound and we articulate speech. For this

reason, the spoken word is sacred to the Apsaalooke. We must be mindful of our speech. If we don't mean what we say, we are not to make any commitments, promises or vows. If we don't know the meaning of a word, we are not to say it; if we do not know the proper pronunciation of a certain word, we are not to say it for fear that we may cause harm to come to ourselves or to others. If we are going to talk about something we did for someone, it is better if we don't do it.

The power and sacredness of the spoken word and the power of the positive mind was the cause of our many accomplishments. Our clan fathers and clan mothers would wish or ask for certain things for us, and events to happen in our lives. They instilled positive re-enforcement in us. If we rely on those thoughts and wishes, and if we applied ourselves, strived to accomplish these goals, they always come true. It is setting goals and objectives and striving to meet these goals; it is the investment that our clan fathers and clan mothers made. When we are prosperous, we must share our good fortunes with them. We must also share our good fortunes with our next of kin. This was how we retained our prosperity. Caring and sharing is what life is all about. The Apsaalooke way of life is built on relationships with self and with others. Relationship with them is based on trust and respect.

Fire – Fire represents death. When fire gets near us, when it burns our personal belongings, it is a bad omen. During historic times, the belongings of a deceased person were burned, and even practiced today; that is why fire is feared.

Fire is sacred. It has mystic powers as all other elements. It is one of the greatest powers on this earth. When it is out of control, it is impossible to come to the aid of fellow man. We do not abuse fire; we do not play with it; we respect it with reverence, and we use it in our religions. We build fires and take live embers into our homes to burn incense. We appeal to the maker of fire just as we appeal to the maker of the other elements. We do not go about burning everything up. When we build fires, we build it for a purpose. Everything we do as Apsaalooke, we do for a purpose. The fire is a vital component of the Sacred Sweat Lodge. Indigenous people use fire when coming to the aid of fellowmen, healing.

Water – Water represents life. Water is one of the most powerful forces on this earth. When this power is out of control, it is impossible to come to the assistance of fellowman.

When we have nowhere to turn, we must turn to the water. Water cleans, refreshes, and it nourishes; it sustains life. Most living things need water to survive. When the spirit leaves the body, it is a bad omen. When people die in a dream, it is a bad omen. We have a ritual we go through to avoid any misfortunes; we go to the water. The kindest deed you can bestow upon a person in mourning is to offer them water; a symbol of life.

I offer tobacco and meat to the beings in the water. By appealing to the beings in the water, I am appealing to our Creator. I am not praying to the beings in the water. I am only using them as intermediaries. We respect water with reverence. We use water in our religions. Indigenous people use water when coming to the assistance of fellowman.

Sacred Sites – There are many sacred sites scattered throughout Apsaalooke Country, and however sacred can be interpreted, to the Apsaalooke, sacred means inviolable and sacred to the highest degree.

Rock Art – Rock art is a heritage. Every Indigenous Nation wants a piece of it. It relates to history as, "an untold story about a time before the coming of the white race." Even though some scholars say that archaeology provides "circumstantial evidence of the historical backdrop of the Indigenous groups who roamed the Great Plains," the stories to these works of wonders are not passed on like the very old traditions, passed on from generation to generation. Rock Art is a very private, individual experience; some tell stories of battles; some tell stories of Spirit Patrons/Powers making visitations; and some are displays demonstrating success and victory.

The Apsaalooke are taught to respect others and each other. We are taught to respect Sacred things and Sacred Sites, and we do not duplicate another man's identity. Who knows the meanings of the Rock Art, but the individual who performed the act of painting or scribing the surface of the rock. He is the only person who knows the meaning of his art.

Paint is sacred to the Apsaalooke. The colors we applied to our face and bodies are acquired through Spirit visitations, and divine intervention. We must have the right to apply this paint in a certain manner. Colors are an individual thing amongst the Apsaalooke. Men have certain colors to paint their arrows, and women had certain colors to use in their parfleches and cradle boards. So whenever paint or color is applied, there is sacredness about the application of color.

Fasting

Fasting, Bilisshussaaluuu, going without water.

Bilusshiisaannaao – to go fasting.

Fasting is a commitment, a consequence, and the follow-up of prayers. There are various reasons why individuals go out fasting. In whatever endeavor we undertake, there is a proper way. Preparation is foremost; purification is foremost; purification of mind, body, and spirit must be tended to before anyone ventures off into the wilderness. The Spirit Patrons/Powers are very meticulous; hygiene plays a very important part of the fasting experience. Unkempt individuals, who belch and break wind often, are not good candidates for visitations.

Seclusion, isolation, silence, meditation and sacrifice is what a fasting experience is all about. Individuals cannot be disturbed, distracted nor their environment contaminated. For this reason, one secludes oneself from society, taking the high ground for nights and abstaining from the essential needs. The Apsaalooke count fasting days by nights (baahko).

Taking the high ground. Many, many years ago, when the Apsaalooke evolved around the bison, there were times when bison bulls would stand on knolls and ridges, fasting for days at a time, when the moon is round, facing the rising sun. I asked my father what Baamileetash meant. He told me that was the name of one of his brothers. He was Chiilapbaammileetash, Fasting Bull. When the moon was round, it exerts its most gravity force; it cleansed the minds and bodies. How could an animal much more inferior than the human being practice this ancient way.

Sacrifice is the reason for fasting, but additional sacrifice was exercised to insure success. Self-torture was a means of sacrifice. Walking barefoot on hot rocks for a certain distance or a length of time. Facing the rising sun until the sun sets in the evening. Crying from sunup until sundown. Our ancestors would tie buffalo hides or skulls to their skin and drag them until the

skin gave way. Some would chop fingers off at the joint and offer it to the sun, "I give you this, you give me something." When blood was sacrificed at a fasting site, that meant sincerity.

People in mourning would often lacerate their bodies, cut their hair and take to the high ground, Akisshinnaache. This was also another means of fasting. Life was so incredibly precious, that the pain of the flesh was no comparison to the loss of a loved one; they took no interest in living. After many days, relatives and friends would go after them, console them, comfort them, inspire them and bring them home. The Apsaalooke never fasted more than three times in their lifetime, Iishoopilissah. Don't try it the fourth time. If you are not successful after the third attempt, you must seek other avenues of attaining Spirit Patrons/Powers. It was usually your clan fathers, big brothers or elders whom you approached. Today, the Apsaalooke fast many times in a year and they fast many times in their lifetime. Foreign cultures and belief-ways have influenced us. If we are disrupted, interfered with and made to violate our belief-ways, the entity that caused these violations is bad; even if it is in the form of a prayer.

Fasting Sites

The fasting site is usually marked or identified with an oval shape of rocks. Some say this is for protection, but it is a means of consecration, making a fasting site hallow. The fasting site is marked to be visible and to be respected. The Apsaalooke never occupy another man's fasting site, Bachalaxapeenmaaxapissuk; we respect these sites with reverence.

Fasting sites - places where there were individual experiences with the spirit world. No one knows what took place at these sacred sites, and no one knows what Spirit Patrons/Powers visited these sacred sites except the person who fasted there at these sites.

Spirit Patrons/Powers are known to be very sullen and conceited. If proper care and attention is not displayed, they are known to be very sullen and conceited; if proper care and attention is not displayed, they are known to return to the spirit world. For this reason, fasting sites are not disturbed. There are certain things that must be avoided and there are certain things that must not come in contact with these Spirit Patron/Powers. Certain foods cannot be eaten; certain language must not be spoken; and certain thoughts cannot be thought. There are many things that are associated with these powers, too numerous to mention, but the ultimate was to be pure, in mind and body. Fasting sites have notions of life associated with them; they cannot be used for final resting places. To the Apsaalooke, there is a distinction between life and death and we do not associate them with each other. When we are happy, we sing and when we are sad, we cry. It is on a wide spectrum where each emotion is on the extreme of each other.

Siege Sites

Siege sites are fortifications where certain individuals were held under fire being surrounded by hostile troops in order to induce surrender, sometimes for prolonged periods of time, which caused disorder or stress and most of the time, death. There at these siege sites, many of the occupants were killed. The Apsaalooke would always allow a couple enemies to get away, to relate the story.

Camp Sites

There is nothing that is forever, except campsites; they are forever, and Teepee Rings are evidence of dwellings. Although Teepee Rings are considered historical sites, there may have been a healing ritual; there may have been prayers uttered in these sites; there surely was incense burned, and the pipe smoked and offered to the powers. Campsites are sacred to the Apsaalooke. Some campsites are also final resting places.

Mourning Sites

The people before took the loss of a loved one quite serious. They mutilated their bodies, they lacerated their arms and legs; they punctured holes in their heads with sharp objects and they cut their hair at the base of the skull and took to the high ground. Apsaalooke women exemplified their beauty with their hair, so the cutting of hair and defacing or permanent scars on their bodies were a sign of the pain of affliction from loss of a loved one. These sites are not marked.

There are rites performed at these sites. Much blood and tears were shed. The most Prestigious Mourning Site is along I-90, in the west side of Fly Creek. Today it is plowed under a hay meadow.

Final Resting Places

Hulishoopiio-Scaffolds – Elevated for protection from animals and predators, deceased people were swaddled with robes and placed on these scaffolds. Eventually these scaffolds would crumble and the bodies would come down. Rocks and boulders would be placed on top of them for protection. I doubt if the body fell apart, they were swaddled with robes and wrapped with ropes. Although, we do not disturb the human remains, we did this as a matter of respect.

Ashalaxxo-Lodge – Swaddled bodies wrapped with robes and secured with ropes were laid to rest in their lodges with all their personal belongings. The door was closed, tied and weighted down and left alone. Even their animals were turned loose outside. Their personal belongings did not belong to anyone, no one could claim them. Whatever we put on or placed with the deceased cannot be claimed by anyone; we have consecrated them back to our Creator along with the deceased person.

Tree Resting Places – Balalaxoo – Final resting-places changed from scaffold to trees when we were put on the reservation. The fork of the branches of large trees became a final resting-place. Bodies swaddled with robes and secured with rope were wedged in the fork of branches of the larger trees along the waterways. If the bodies fell, they were covered with rock and boulders but the floods throughout the years have covered their resting places with silt and sediment.

Rock Ledges / Crevices – Rock ledges and crevices were used as final resting places for the victims of the Smallpox Epidemic of 1843, when the United States used army blankets and rations festured with the small-pox germ and distributed at Fort Parker, where they lay the Kaiki Blanket. The victims were numerous; we had to revert to rock ledges and crevices to lay the victims to rest.

Spirituality

Spirituality is instilled in us since the moment of conception. Soon after the news of an expecting mother is announced, usually through prayers made by the clan mothers and elders, there are prayers, wishes, and vows uttered in behalf of the One Given To Us: "May all things be right when we greet the One Given Us."

"No matter, if the One Given Us is a little boy or a little girl, may she/he be a perfect human being." "May the One Given Us be healthy;" "May the One Given Us grow up in a good way;" "May the One Given Us be an outstanding person;" "May the One Given Us live to be very old." Prayers such as these are said for the unborn child but we do not make preparations. To prepare for an unborn child is feared. If a child breathes on his/her own, he/she is a part of us. If a child doesn't breathe on his/her own when they are born, he/she is not a part of us. When a healthy child arrives, only then do we start gathering clothes and the necessities.

We do not mourn stillborn deaths. Although we use all precautions, we cannot defy the will of our Maker. We do not associate with the Beings Without Bodies. To mourn a stillborn child is asking for trouble. They have been known to have wiped out whole families for mourning for them.

The most crucial time in a child's life is the first 36 months of its life. However the child is nurtured, the first three years of its life is what the child will be for the rest of its life. If the child is nurtured in a kind, loving, caring and sharing environment, that child will be a kind, loving, caring, and sharing individual, but if a child is nurtured in an abusive, violent, and disrespectful environment, that child will be an abusive, violent, and disrespectful individual for the rest of its life. All the rehabilitating will not change that individual. So most of our problems are self-inflicted. It is how we nurture our children. Of course, peers have something to do with it, but if a child has the inert core, they tend not to stray too far.

The spirit, the mind, the brain, the personality, no matter how we describe it, the psyche is what life is all about; it is our life. Spirituality is instilled, nurtured and practiced. As children, we are nudged, encouraged; but as adults we have an understanding, that is if our parents and grandparents did their jobs. In the past 125 years, our way of life was squashed, more recently in the past 80 years.

Animal Life – The most prestigious sacred animal to the Apsaalooke would probably be the buffalo. We evolved around this great animal. We were practically one to one with this magnificent animal. We followed the mighty herds throughout the plains; we imitated its movements and sounds, and we became nomadic as they were. This animal nourished, clothed and sheltered us. We could run for miles upon miles without tiring.

You can imagine the devastation and the humiliation when this sacred animal was wiped out. We have not fully recovered from the devitalizing and demoralizing blow incurred. We should put in for a Buffalo Claim. This sacred animal was the center of our religion, especially the Sun Dance Religion.

All the living things are sacred to the Apsaalooke, and there are many animals that the Apsaalooke consider sacred. Various animals appear in visitations, and many animals become Spirit Patrons/Spirit Powers.

Elk – The elk nourished us and clothed us. It played an important role in our cultural and religious activities. Elk have mystic power; they have been known to transform themselves into women.

Deer – This animal has also nourished and clothed us. It is perhaps the one animal that has helped us to retain our clout after the eradication of the buffalo.

Bear – A sacred animal, probably the most fierce amongst the animals we associate with. We are told, we Apsaalooke have a bear tooth in our palm; we growl like the bear often. We fill ourselves with water, and we make the hissing sound of the bear when we are injured. Apsaalooke very seldom eat bear meat; it is reported anyone who eats bear meat will lose all his or her teeth.

White Tail Deer – The white tail deer also has mystic powers. They can transform themselves into women. The white tail has nourished and clothed us throughout the centuries.

Mink – Mink also have mystic powers. They can transform themselves into women. The mink is probably the most treacherous of all the animals who transform themselves. The mink is known to have bewitched men; where they will follow the mink wherever it goes. Some travel many miles to be with the mink that has cast a spell on them. Sometimes these men will actually get into the water, and their clothes will be soaked when they return home; a sign that a spell has been put on them.

Otter – Otters are used in our religious ceremonies, especially in the Sacred Tobacco Society. The otter skin is used in the warrior societies, Sacred Tobacco Society and various other societies.

Moose – Although rare, the moose has nourished and clothed us; its antlers were used for plates.

Mountain Lion – The most agile of the predators, the mountain lion, had its place in the Apsaalooke way of life. There are not too many men who are fortunate enough to kill a mountain lion. The cougar skin was the cushion of the women's old time saddle, it symbolized the hunters in the family. The mountain lion is sacred to the Apsaalooke. Where the Mountain Lion Lays, AKA Pompeys Pillar, was strictly reserved for this fierce animal. An Apsaalooke fasting there realized that mountain lions occupied that huge boulder, they came to him but they did not hurt him. He completed his fasting quest but from that moment on, it has been identified as the place Where The Mountain Lion Lays.

Above in a cloud a voice said, "Any Apsaalooke who fasts at Where The Mountain Lion Lays will lead you to prosperity." I doubt if the challenge was ever met, but it would be impossible to fast there with all the commotion going on.

Badger – The source of one of the Sacred Sweat Lodge is also the source of the successor of the rock that held the lodge down, the stake.

Wolves – The wolves were the beast of burden at one time. These wolves were captured as pups and raised as pets to help with the mobility of the tribe. They were the dogs of the Apsaalooke. Dogs are sacred to the Apsaalooke, but it was these domesticated wolves that were sacred, not

any ordinary mutt. The scout took up the characteristics and sounds of the wolves, Akchiite; scout literally means to be wolf-like.

Coyote – The coyote has been an ally to the Apsaalooke. When you hear some coyotes howling at dusk, they are not coyotes, they are the Apsaalooke; they know that you are on their land.

Weasel – Although small, the weasel is one of the quickest and most agile creatures. It has been a Spirit Patron to many Apsaalooke. Yellow paint is symbolic of this animal. The weasel plays an important role in the Sacred Tobacco Society and is used in the warrior societies.

Eagle – Like the buffalo, the eagle is the most sacred bird to the Apsaalooke. Its body parts and feathers are used for merit lodges. At one time, women were not allowed to have any eagle parts on them. In all of our Apsaalooke religions, the eagle had its place.

Prairie Falcon – The fastest thing in flight, the falcon has been a Spirit Patron to some Apsaalooke. Its speed is used in preparing horses for battle and match races. Stripped tail falcon, for lack of a better term, has religious significance; it is used in battle and it is used for a prosperous life.

Raven – The raven is mistakenly identified as the extinct bird that the Apsaalooke were named after.

Hawk – Various hawks are used in religious ceremonies, and some are even Spirit Patrons. The rough-legged hawk, which has the markings of the eagle during the winter months, has spiritual and religious significance.

Meadowlark – Used in the Sacred Tobacco Society. A group or society in the Sacred Tobacco Society is named the Meadowlark Society and they have songs, too.

Blackbirds – Blackbirds are Spirit Patrons to individuals who have Spirit Powers relating to the horse. Also used in Tobacco Society.

Robin – Robins are used in the Sacred Tobacco Society. They have songs relating to the robin. Robins are religious symbols.

Killdeer – The killdeer is used to predict the weather. It is a sacred bird.

Chickadee – Another bird used to predict the weather. A chickadee caught in the winter can tell what the remaining months of winter will be.

Owls – Owls are messengers. They predict the weather and predicaments.

Screech Owls – Screech Owls are shunned. Apsaalooke fear these birds. Whenever a screech owl comes around, there is sure to be bad news, even death news.

Everything is sacred; the earth, the water, the wind and the fire, are all natural phenomenon we use in our daily lives and in our sacred religions. We will ask that these elements, animals, and plant life be preserved and protected for the future generations that are yet to be born. Our predecessors were good stewards. They made sure we would enjoy life as much as they did; we must do the same. In future generations, will our great, great, great grandchildren need

protective clothing to go out of doors; will they need breathing apparatus to go out and play? These are the things that are of prime concern to us.

Life is a never-ending process; it will continue after we are gone; it will take the living to continue life. Will they suffer for our wrongdoing? Mother Nature will take care of herself; it has been proven time and time again. It is we, the inhabitants who must look out for ourselves. We are part of our mother, the earth. She has been polluted with all kinds of chemicals to yield more crops, which is all in the name of money. Our youth are all polluted with chemicals, also all in the name of money. We must stop pollution of our sacred things if we want our future generations to enjoy their stay on this earth.

There are Prestigious Sacred Sites, and these are prestigious Historical Sites throughout Apsaalooke Country. Some of these sites may be classified as Prestigious Historical/Sacred Sites. The Teepee Rings, evidence of a dwelling, is classified as a Prestigious Historical/Sacred Site. Surely there were prayers uttered there; there may have been some religious or healing ritual performed there. There is nothing forever except campsites.

Fasting Sites are definitely Prestigious Sacred Sites; Final Resting Sites are Prestigious Sacred Sites. Occupational Sites are classified as Prestigious Historical/Sacred Sites. Only individuals who had the right to manufacture certain things could manufacture them. Most of our knowledge on the natural world was learned from the bird and animal world. It is usually through a Spirit Patron or Spirit Power that these ways are passed on to us. The most Prestigious Sacred Site, according to the Apsaalooke is the place where the Sacred Tobacco Plant is found.

The Sacred Tobacco we talk about is not smoked; it is planted, harvested, and placed in a Sacred Tobacco Bundle and Sacred Tobacco Necklaces used in the Sacred Tobacco Society Religion. Since we didn't speak the English language, and our interpreters being illiterate in the Apsaalooke language, we didn't know what went into our treaty negotiations. We found out later but it was water under the bridge. In the 1868 treaty negotiations, three of our most Prestigious Sacred Sites were taken from us. Where Raven Owner was Badgered, the Big Camp Site, AKA Medicine Wheel, and Grizzly Bear Lodge, AKA Devil's Tower.

The Big Camp Site is the origin of the Apsaalooke Sun Dance; it was outlawed some years ago.

Bad Omen Mountain AKA Crazy Mountains – The home of the large beings.

Hole In Rock – Due north of the Hole In the Rock, about two small protrusions of the canyon wall, Big Metal was shoved off into the canyon by his stepfather. A small juniper growing out of the canyon wall saved his fall; he straddled the juniper and stayed there for four days. At first the little boy cried day and night; he was so hoarse he could hardly make any sounds. All of First Maker's creations tried to help the little boy, but no one was successful. The Big Horn Sheep were going to help him, but they had to wait for Big Metal. On the morning of the fifth day, as the sun was coming up over the mountain with the sunlight revealing the red on the canyon walls, a bell could be heard ringing through the canyon walls. The sound came closer until Big Metal appeared. He was a huge ram, with hoofs and horns glittering in the sun. Three of the Big Horn Sheep took turns carrying the little boy to safety. Big Metal was the fourth one, running along the sheer canyon walls, all reached the bottom of the canyon without much difficulty. Big Metal sang and ran along the canyon with the little boy riding on his neck,

holding his horns. The ringing of the bell and the striking of his hoofs in the rock could be heard in between his singing. They emerged from the canyon, at the bright red canyon mouth and made it to solid ground. Big Metal continued his pace, with all the animals and birds following him, until he reached the level ground along Hunters Trail AKA Grapevine Creek. There he told the little boy to open his eyes and dismount. The little boy dismounted and all the birds and animals that tried to rescue him came to greet him.

Big Metal gave his name to the little boy and told him he would live a very long time. He told the little boy that this was the river of the Big Horns and that the name of the river should never change. If the name of the river were ever changed, that would be the end of the Apsaalooke. All the birds and animals gave him Spirit Patrons and Spirit Power. The little boy was instructed to do a certain thing when he reached home. He was given a piece of sinew and he was told when he reached home, his stepfather would be home nude in their teepee. He would have just returned from a bath, he would be naked except for his robe, which he would have wrapped around him. He would be sitting close to the fire, wringing his hair and extracting water from it. The fire would be low but the embers would still be alive. He was to throw the sinew into the fire, on top of the embers. The little boy did as he was told and his stepfather crimped up, grunted and ran out of the lodge never to be seen or heard from again. Big Metal lived four generations before he died. He was a very old man. The people in the village kept an eye on him; and they wanted to know how he would die. One day he pricked his hand while picking up a stick; he came home and mentioned that he had punctured his hand. The small puncture started to swell and expand up his arm. Before long the swelling engulfed his whole arm and started swelling his body. Big Metal died shortly after that. He is buried about four miles southwest of St. Xavier, Montana.

Bison Jumps

Back in Mystical time, Old Man Coyote caused some bison to jump and fall over a cliff and fall to their deaths. He was out and about, looking for food, as usual, and he came upon a small bison herd. He said, "They said, you can't run very fast because you are big, clumsy, and have big feet. I want to prove them wrong. I want to race you to see who is the fastest. I will go and place some rocks on the ground to make a finish line. While we are running, we'll close our eyes until we reach those rocks. When I say open your eyes, we'll all open our eyes at the same time to see who the winner is."

Old Man Coyote went and placed two rocks, some distance apart, on the edge of a cliff and went back to the herd. The herd all got in a line to race, when Old Man Coyote said, "Let's do it." They all ran with all their might with their eyes closed. Old Man Coyote ran with one eye opened. When they were about to the cliff, he said, "Open your eyes." Since he was on the end of the line, he maneuvered out of the way. The bison herd was right on the edge of the cliff; they didn't have time to react, and their momentum carried them over the cliff.

Old Man Coyote found a shallow place to climb down the cliff. He took a rock and bloodied his nose. When he reached the bottom of the cliff, a yellow bison calf was dragging himself by his fore legs. The bison calf said, "Old Man Coyote, if I get out of this alive, I promise to kill you." Old Man Coyote picked up a rock and killed the yellow bison calf.

All of a sudden there appeared Shiilape and Little Fox. Old Man Coyote would butcher a bison and hand it to Shiilape, who would eat up the bison, as fast as Old Man Coyote could butcher them. Old Man Coyote looked around and saw just a few carcasses left. He told Shiilape to go and find his own meat. Shiilape said, "If I leave, you will have no scout. If you don't want a scout, I'll leave." So he left. While butchering and eating the remaining bison, Old Man Coyote said, "Man of long ago, you are not the only being on the face of this earth." Meaning there will always be someone a little better than you.

Brings Game Without Shooting, a clan amongst the Apsaalooke, makes you wonder how they gathered their meat. These clans were not the sharp shooters or the marksmen some of the other clans were.

Jumping bison over cliffs is a religious ceremony. It was performed only by individuals who had the rite to perform this ceremony. There are some truths and half-truths about the matter of describing the Bison Jump. The eyesight of the bison was not too good, but they have a very keen sense of smell, and bison do have a tendency to stampede. So with these characteristics of the bison in mind, the Bison Jumps were planned.

Drive lines are constructed by placing semi-flat rocks on the ground the length of the desired drive lines. The rock must be semi-flat because live coals/embers, are placed on each rock, where incense is burned. The bison are stampeded toward the mouth of the drive lines. Stampeding bison can stampede for miles and miles before they recede. Once the bison reach the funnel of the drive lines, the aroma of the incense keeps the bison away from the drive lines. The momentum of the stampeding herd propelled the entire herd to jump and fall over the cliff.

The Hollywood versions of the Indian hiding behind rocks and under animal skins are not true. It was someone's interpretation, someone who couldn't say, "I don't know."

Recommendation

What should have happened; what should have been transacted some fifty years ago, is not being embarked upon. The paternalism of the United States Government has been so intent, anything and everything was formulated for us. The Indigenous Nations should have been extended the opportunities of establishing their own policy; how we want legislation/statutes to protect us. If what we are doing would have happened much sooner, we could have protected one of our most Prestigious Sacred Sites from disturbance and contamination, the Big Camp Site AKA Medicine Wheel. Since we were not extended the opportunity of establishing policy, we thought by not revealing our Sacred Sites, they would not be noticed, thereby, being protected from disturbance and contamination. We find that we are grossly mistaken.

The Indigenous Nations are all diverse, so we cannot speak on their behalf. What may be proper for us may not be right for another group.

Even though the dominate society is involved with a basic concern with the world, with material things instead of eternal and spiritual interest, a secular way of thinking to find the ultimate explanations of everything, the final end of human beings and the limits of what the senses can discover, we make the following recommendations:

- I. We consider human remains sacred. When we lay our deceased loved ones to rest, that is the last time we touch them. Whatever we put on them does not belong to anyone, nobody can claim these items, and we consecrate them back to our Creator. To disturb them is sacrilegious.

A. Recent disturbance – Have the individual who disturbs the human remains put it back.

B. Since it is the responsibility of county coroners to handle deceased persons, we would elect to have the county coroner interment the human remains.

- II. Disturbance while digging or excavating.

Stop all proceedings; contact the Apsaalooke Culture Affairs Department, State Historical Office and the appropriate County Coroner. Extreme caution is used when making improvements and developments. If possible, avoid removing these preservation of rocks and boulders, they may be Final Resting-Places.

- III. Human Remains

Human remains and burial sites are Sacred to the Apsaalooke. We have consecrated our departed ones back to our Creator. At all cost, do not disturb nor remove any further items. If accidentally disturbed, notify the Apsaalooke Cultural Affairs Department, Apsaalooke Nation, and the appropriate County Coroner.

- IV. Historical Sites – To be identified and protected from destruction.

- V. Sacred Sites – To be identified and protected from destruction and contamination.

- VI. Plants – Medicinal plants and roots identified shall be protected from destruction, contamination and eradication.

- VII. Ceremonial Foods – Shall be protected from contamination and eradication.

- VIII. Trees – Trees, brush and shrubs identified shall be protected and preserved from contamination, destruction, and eradication. Willows along waterways have taken a lot of abusing to the point of non-existence.

- IX. Animals – Animals used in religious ritual and ceremonies shall be protected and preserved from injury and extinction. Animals used as ceremonial foods shall be protected and preserved from injury and extinction.